DAVID E. JANSSEN
Chief Administrative Officer

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District

YVONNE B. BURKE
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

April 20, 2006
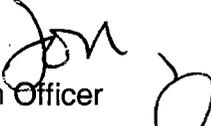
To: Jon Fullinwider
         Chief Information Officer

From: David E. Janssen
         Chief Administrative Officer

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FUND PROPOSAL - UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITY WEBSITE EXPANSION PROJECT

Consistent with the objectives of the County's Strategic Plan Goal 6 for Municipal Services to Unincorporated Areas, the Chief Administrative Office, Office of Unincorporated Areas Services and Special Projects is submitting an Information Technology Fund proposal for an Unincorporated Community Website Enhancement and Expansion Project.

In June 2004, the Office of Unincorporated Area Services with the assistance of the Internal Services Department, Internet Development Division (ISD/IDD), and with the consensus of the affected Board offices, launched two pilot unincorporated community Websites for: Whittier (http://whittier.lacounty.info) and East Los Angeles (http://eastla.lacounty.info). While the pilot Websites provide a valuable information resource to these communities, they have significant limitations that we believe can be resolved through application of a content management system and various other enhancements addressed in our attached proposal. Development of these model Websites for East Los Angeles and Whittier will provide a blueprint that can be expanded to create customized Websites for other unincorporated communities.

We appreciate your consideration of our proposal. If you have any questions, please contact Fernando Angell of my staff at (213) 974-1145.

DEJ:MKZ
DSP:FA:os

Attachment (1)

c: Each Supervisor

UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITY WEBSITE ENHANCEMENT AND EXPANSION PROJECT PHASE I

Project Proposal
May 2006

Chief Administrative Office

Office of Unincorporated Area Services and Special Projects

PROJECT LEADER
Fernando Angell
Chief Administrative Office
Office of Unincorporated Area Services and Special Projects (OUAS&SP)
(213) 974-1145 – Voice
(213) 633-5085 - Fax
fangell@cao.co.la.ca.us

BACKGROUND

The goal of the proposed project is to develop Websites that will provide residents of unincorporated areas access to information on County municipal services within their community as well as regional services offered countywide. The creation of unincorporated community Websites is consistent with Goals 1, 3, and 6 of the County's Strategic Plan: Service Excellence; Organizational Effectiveness; and Community Services.

In June 2004, the Office of Unincorporated Area Services (OUAS) with the assistance of the Internal Services Department, Internet Development Division (ISD/IDD), and with the consensus of the affected Board offices, launched two pilot unincorporated community Websites for: Whittier (http://whittier.lacounty.info) and East Los Angeles (http://eastla.lacounty.info). The unincorporated communities of Whittier and East Los Angeles were selected because of their relatively large size, both in terms of population and geography. In addition, both areas have a distinct community identity.

In terms of the remaining County unincorporated areas, they must rely on County departmental Websites (e.g., Parks and Recreation, Health Services, and Regional Planning) that offer general rather than community specific information.

Over the last 18 months it has become apparent that the pilot unincorporated community Websites for East Los Angeles and Whittier have significant limitations. Any modifications to the Website content involves utilization of ISD/IDD services requiring departments to provide updates to OUAS in a Word document that is edited and forwarded to ISD/IDD for posting. We are proposing replacing this cumbersome process with a more streamlined approach that will be more efficient, cost-effective and responsive to the needs of the unincorporated communities that we serve.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Our scope of work focuses on three objectives: 1) obtaining a more flexible Website system that allows direct access for updating information to the community; 2) upgrading our two existing Websites; and 3) expanding the project to unincorporated areas that do not currently have Websites.

System Flexibility

In order to meet the first objective, OUAS and ISD/IDD are proposing a content management system that will allow departments to directly place updated information in a staging area that can be edited and posted to the Website by OUAS. The specific updated Web content can be tied directly to the menu options. We are also proposing the expansion of menu options into a more user-friendly format based on Board office and community feedback from the County's Community Connections guides. Additionally, the Homepage will be designed to serve as an entry point to all of the community Websites.

Upgrading Existing Websites

With a more flexible system in place, we will be able to launch our next objective which is to upgrade the East Los Angeles and Whittier Websites. These model Websites will provide a blueprint for ultimately expanding Websites to other unincorporated areas. Upgrading the East Los Angeles Website, (serving residents in the First District), is particularly crucial in light of the fact that the County Civic Center development is underway in this community and the first unincorporated area County Hall is scheduled to open in May 2006. We anticipate a great deal of community interest in services and information related to the opening of the County Hall and expanded development of the Civic Center. Whittier is served by the First and Fourth Districts and this populated community has numerous ongoing activities that the Board offices are interested in highlighting through a Website.

Website Expansion

With an efficient structural platform and cost-ffective approach established, our final objective is to expand the project to unincorporated areas that do not currently have Websites. The first two expansion Websites selected by the Board offices will serve the communities of Florence-Firestone and Castaic/Stevenson Ranch/Val Verde.

Florence-Firestone, served by the First and Second Districts, has formed a Community Enhancement Team (CET) comprised of County departments, the Board offices and community leaders. They have targeted key Strategic Focus Areas (SFAs) to improve services to the community and the SFAs are moving forward with community-identified initiatives. Development of a Website for Florence-Firestone will serve two important objectives: 1) address one of the Community Identity and County Information SFA initiatives; and 2) provide a vehicle to disseminate progress on CET projects to the broader community.

Castaic, Stevenson Ranch, and Val Verde, were selected as a regional Website by the Fifth District based on the rapid growth in this part of the County and recent focus on

annexation and boundary change issues. Utilizing a Website format will be an invaluable tool to assist the County in keeping these communities up-to-date on the latest developments in the region and the numerous County services that are available to them as unincorporated area residents.

The ultimate goal of the Board offices and UAS is to expand Websites to all of our larger unincorporated communities and to create community area Websites for smaller communities that are geographically within the same vicinity (see Attachment).

The project consists of the following:

PHASE	ENHANCEMENTS	RESOURCES
Phase I (Current ITF Grant Request)	• Enhance existing framework to integrate the Content Management System (CMS) into the unincorporated Whittier and East Los Angeles Websites. This will allow CAO-OUAS maximum control over maintenance and publishing of Web content;	ISD/IDD and CAO/OUAS
	• Develop two new additional community Websites (La Crescenta/Montrose and Florence-Firestone) which would be modeled after the enhanced framework. A list of proposed community Websites is attached;	ISD/IDD and CAO/OUAS
	• Create a Staging Site for participating departments to post Web content. This will facilitate CAO-OUAS workflow by increasing the efficiency and accuracy of locating Web content information;	ISD/IDD
	• Develop an Internet Website Portal that will contain fully functional components and serve as a hub location for all community Websites;	ISD/IDD and CAO/OUAS
	• Standardize the Menu Bar and provide administrative rights to update the menu;	ISD/IDD and CAO/OUAS
	• Implement community Notification/Subscription List (based on Fifth District Website model) that will allow residents to directly receive updates regarding their community; and	ISD/IDD and CAO/OUAS
	• Implement search capabilities and a section for Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs);	ISD/IDD and CAO/OUAS

	ENHANCEMENTS	RESOURCES
Phase II (Proposed Future Grant Request)	• Conduct a Supplementary Website Assessment to review and refine the enhanced features;	Board Offices, ISD/IDD, and CAO/OUAS
	• Develop a Community Events Calendar using the existing technology structure in the County;	ISD/IDD and CAO-OUAS
	• Develop additional community Websites; and	ISD/IDD and CAO/OUAS
	• Integrate a Geographic Information System (GIS) interface component that will link an area map to community specific data.	ISD/IDD and CAO/UAS
Phase III (Proposed Future Grant Request)	• Develop remaining proposed Websites; and	ISD/IDD and CAO/OUAS
	• Identify a technical capability for residents to provide Weblog comments on specific issues, such as Code Enforcement and Public Safety.	ISD/IDD and CAO/OUAS

BENEFITS

The most significant benefit of the Website enhancement and expansion project is that it will provide the residents of the County's unincorporated communities with access to current quality information and services. Residents who utilize the Websites will have the ability to search for immediate answers to many questions on local County services by accessing the Website on their home computer. For those residents who do not have a home computer with Internet access, computers with Internet access are available at County libraries, community and senior centers, and parks. For many residents, utilizing the Websites will save them an automobile or bus trip to a County facility. County departments will also be able to utilize the Websites as a tool to obtain information about other departments and service providers in the unincorporated area communities.

The Websites will also serve to provide residents a sense of community identity and ownership with a direct connection to their County services. By utilizing the Websites, the number of telephone calls that are currently made to Board offices or County departments may be reduced as residents are able to directly access specific information on County services.

In addition to the current benefits listed above, the expansion project will provide the opportunity for the County to improve upon and market County services, events and projects as they become available.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

The project deliverables for Phase I are as follows:

Phase I

- Update existing Websites (Whittier and East Los Angeles) integrating the CMS to allow for consistent and organized, ongoing maintenance of Website content by involved departments and OUAS.

- Create a staging Website for each additional community Website.

- Develop two new additional community Websites, one for the Florence-Firestone community and one for a regional Website that includes Castaic, Stevenson Ranch, and Val Verde.

- Implement an Internet Website Portal.

- Develop procedures for utilizing the CMS and Staging Website.

- Provide training for CAO/OUAS staff and departments on CMS and Staging Website. Training additional staff will serve as a back-up support to the Project Leader to ensure that updates and changes are conducted in a timely manner.

- Develop and Implement Web Content Specifications for the CMS.

- Test; complete Websites; and establish a target date to launch for enhanced and new Websites.

- Market Websites to communities at County events and in the <u>Community Connections</u>.

FUNDING REQUEST

In our endeavor to keep abreast with the latest emerging technologies, we are requesting that this project be funded for the proposed amount of $214,000. ISD has provided a project estimate of $214,000 for Phase I deliverables as follows:

ISD Estimated Costs for Phase I	
Tasks	
Project Definition	
Update existing Websites (Whittier and ELA).	
Develop two new Websites (Florence-Firestone and a regional Website that includes Castaic, Stevenson Ranch, and Val Verde.)	
Create a staging Website for each additional community Website.	
Implement an Internet Website Portal.	
Customization and Implementation	
Implementation enhanced feature such as : • Standardize the Menu Bar; • Notification/Subscription List; and • Implement Search capabilities and a section for Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	
Content Management and Training	
Total Phase I Costs	**$ 214,000**

Although ISD has provided an estimated cost for Phase I, CAO is requesting to reserve the option of seeking other vendors with emerging technologies that offer cutting edge solutions and whose prices may be less than ISD's proposed estimate. This request to seek other vendors will establish potential alternatives and will allow us to standardize Website development to implement the most advanced technology. In addition, if a substantial cost savings is realized, we would be able to initiate development of additional Websites.

This proposal conforms with the Chief Information Office's on-going practice of promoting emerging technology with long-term value, as well as cutting-edge Website development in a cost-effective manner.

Phase I of the proposed project is designed to be implemented over a one-year period and then operated on an ongoing basis with quarterly content updates from that point forward. In addition, as mentioned on Page 4 of this proposal during Phase II, our office will conduct a supplemental Website Assessment to review and update existing technology, as necessary.

A project timeline that reflects the Website Phase I development will be presented at such time as a vendor is selected through the appropriate County process.

MAINTENANCE

The Websites will be hosted on the Stellent CMS server whose maintenance costs are allocated countywide.

As part of the deliverables for the project, a customized Training User's Guide and four (4) hours of Stellant CMS Training will be provided to OUAS Project Manager and other staff. Once the Website has been published, content will be updated and maintained quarterly by OUAS staff.

CONCLUSION

The funding of this project will provide unincorporated area residents with easy access to information on the County's municipal and regional services. Additionally, the funding will assist OUAS by: 1) establishing a structural model that will be the blueprint for development of unincorporated community Websites countywide; and 2) incorporating the CMS to allow CAO/OUAS maximum control over maintaining and publishing content.